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HISTORY OF HASTINGS, INDIANA



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OF  
HASTINGS, INDIANA

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HISTORY  
of  
HASTINGS, INDIANA  
  
(A History Of The Milford-Nappanee Area)

(INDEXED)



RAZING OF OLD HASTINGS LANDMARK INSPIRES SERIES OF  
HISTORICAL ARTICLES

First In A Series

By Kenneth Haney

(Editor's Note: The following is the first in a series of articles written by Kenneth Haney on the history of Hastings, a small community located west of Milford).

The first store was in one room of a house on the present site of the Jim Rumfelt home, and was run by grandma and grandpa Estep (all elderly folks were respected by these titles).

About 1890 a store was built by John Hoosier on the corner just north of Robert Heckamans'. Mr. Hoosier was returning home from hauling a load of wood to Milford (it is thought from Jacob McLaughlin, attorney) when his team ran away, throwing him under the wagon wheel and injuring his hip for life.

After a few years the store was moved near the spot where the present 50 feet by 22 feet frame structure was built by George Cummins. The lower story was used for merchandise and

the upper story, an auditorium, was reached by wooden steps in the northeast corner from the outside.

It is a question who built the house, but Daniel and Ella Haney, the parents of Welcome and Clara (Haney) Fox lived here for a time before it was purchased by Sam Estep, as well as the Hoosier store.

The store operators besides Estep, and Cummins were Ben Stump (father of William Stump and Mrs. Stoffel DeFreese), John Brown (later moved to Constantine, Michigan), Guy Lambert, Carson Wise, Joe Bushong, Orville Silveus, John Green, Robert Rumfelt, Don Ruple, William Tusing, and John Kauffman, the last one in 1958. Mr. Tusing operated the store the longest.

#### First Barber

Claude Weimer was the first barber using one of the buildings and later moving to South Bend.

Another barber, for years, was Oscar (Jim) Rumfelt. He had a barber chair in his kitchen for many years. Many a young squaling child got his first hair "shingling" (hair cut) here.

In the store were kept bolts, nails and other hardware, coal oil (kerosene), tobacco, mainly chewing tobacco, cigars, and pipe tobacco.

This was the period when each man "rolled" his own cigarettes. Some of the beginners' specimens looked like a rag but others resembled the commercial ones of today. Near the stove was the cuspidor (spittoon) which was a must for all tobacco chewers. Many were accurate but others were like boys who tried to hit a mark with their first pea shooter. Many (for an excuse) said the habit was a good tooth preserver.

#### In The Store

As you came into the store you saw canned goods on the shelves. Old reliable and Lion Coffee, Lennox and Fels-Naptha soap and oodles of nature health remedies. Bulk candy such as striped stick candy, horehound, licorice and kisses were the main sellers. Other bulk products measured from the barrel were light brown, dark brown, soft white and granulated sugar, salt, and apple vinegar. Cheese was cut from a round flat roll and crackers were kept in a large glass container which would hold about a barrel. Coffee was ground on the spot by a few spins of the coffee grinder, which had two large balance wheels, or the beans were taken home and ground in a small miniature affair.

Yard goods, thread, buttons, and lace were kept, calico was five cents a yard.

On one side was a stock of horsewhips, but many used a gad (switch) cut from a limb of a tree, as far as I know no "blacksnakes" were sold. These were sewed leather with a lash on the end which when used severely would cut an animal's hide open and were very cruel and vicious.

Before being outlawed, some one-armed bandits (slot machines) and punch boards were found in the store.

### The Mail

The first mail was taken to the Hastings store when a man going to Milford brought his neighbors' mail along home with him.

The first paid mail deliverer to Hastings, back in 1890, was Madison (Matt) Biller, followed by James Biller, and ending by Noah Tusing carrying it by horseback or wagon for four or five years. He left Hastings at 1 p.m. and arrived back from Milford at 4 p.m. for the large sum of 50 cents a trip.

In 1905 R.F.D. came into being with Charles Orn being the first carrier. After a few years James Fuller became the likeable daily visitor until his retirement. He sometimes fed

his horse on the David Dausman farm. In the winter time he sometimes changed his horse at the half way mark. For a short time the horse and wagon was replaced by a motorcycle. They traveled the main roads and many folks had to go a half to three-quarters of a mile to their mail box.

### Ice

At one time there was an ice house at the back of the store. Ice cut from the Hollar pond, created by taking the clay from the hole to make brick for the Hastings school house, was stored in cakes, separated by and insulated by sawdust.

When this ran out Irvin Troup, who operated the Milford Ice Company, delivered to Hastings. His ice house was located west of the present bathing beach at Waubee Lake. With ice, the only refrigeration in those days, the ice man was an important fellow on hot summer days.

### The Auditorium

The main trading night was Saturday, as well as for entertainment. Square dances were held with folks coming from outlying places.

At other times movies were shown and many political caucuses were held in the auditorium and in the school house.

Political speeches were sometimes fiery and unless the party won, so they said, the country was a goner. The islanders took and take their politics seriously. Many a weighty national issue was settled by them on the cracker barrel and wooden boxes in which everything was shipped.

#### THE ORIGIN OF HASTINGS; HOW IT WAS NAMED?

##### Second in a Series

By Kenneth Haney

It is not known how the name originated. It could have come from the Battle of Hastings in 1066. It certainly was a battle to subdue this wilderness.

A more likely origin would be a shortening of "hay strings."

In the early days the marsh hay was cut with a scythe and put in piles. Later, in the winter, when these marshes were frozen it was hauled in to feed.

These marshes and the higher ground were saturated with bumblebee nests. In fact the saying, "thick as bumblebees" was a common expression. One thing was sure - - they were

excellent pollenizers and a cloverseed yield of three to five bushels per acre was not uncommon.

A bumblebee always warns you but those wasps, yellow jackets and hornets were very rude in their introduction.

### Jefferson Township

Jefferson township originally had 36 sections, but due to the Mt. Tabor neighborhood difficulty in getting across the marsh to vote at Hastings it was detached and those five sections were added to Scott Township.

The boundary is a zig-zag line following the south edge of the marsh.

Between the south marsh and the north marsh lies the island or high land, which was originally covered with virgin timber of all varieties. Many of the trees measured three to five feet "across the stump" in diameter. Except what it took for building, these trees were rolled together and burned for a "clearing." Between these stumps corn was hand planted.

Later on the Omer Neff ditch was dug from road 1200N and 600W to Turkey Creek.

The Joe Arme y ditch came in from the north branch of the Yellow River. The Dausman ditch starts about a mile southeast of the store and flows nearly due west into the Yellow River.

The last one flows into the Mississippi River and the first one into the St. Lawrence River. Many farms have water flowing into both the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico.

With the coming of smaller open ditches came the "blind" or underground drainage. The first were open ditches in which small straight poles were piled and covered over with dirt which soon filled up. Next came two by eight's nailed to form a tube with the bottom side missing, this was a great improvement. Lastly came the clay tile and with this the island or "stix" took on progress.

### Three Exits

In the early days there were only three exits - - the Orn road to Milford, what is now Road 19 to Nappanee and the road to Clunette.

The parts over the bogs were corduroy or logs placed side by side crossways in the roadbed and covered with dirt. As you crossed these roadways you could see the ground and water far out moving. They were sometimes called "sink holes." After 100 years and continual filling in, Road 19 is till "sinking."

Some of the ditchers, who could bring up nearly a perfect "fall," were George Roberts, Peter Jensen, Leland Rohrer, John



Kaiser, and Walter Kline. This hard, backbreaking work certainly separated the men from the boys.

### Onions

After the lowering of the water level the ground was plowed, the tussocks carried off and sometimes the ground hand raked, then it was ready for onions - - the first major muck crop.

The onion seed was drilled in rows about 14 inches wide. They were then wheel hoed and then weeded.

Frank and Charlie Geiger, Mrs. Emma Lentz's brothers, were the giants of the local industry. They gathered all available island kids as well as 50 to 75 from Milford. the prevailing rates were  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cents per hour for one row, five cents for two rows, and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  cents for three rows or 75 cents for a 10 hour day.

Whenever I think of that grinding, gritty muck on my knees they still hurt, but 25 cents would buy a pair of overalls.

With large families every penny helped to put "grub" or "vittles" (food) on the table.

I have seen many red and yellow globe onions as big as indoor balls.

After putting in "wind rows" they were hand topped at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  cents a bushel depending on size. Mrs. Emma Biller has topped about as many onions as anyone in the township.

Those onion storages, some like slatted corn cribs and some double-walled for winter storage, held thousands of bushels. They were located at the corner of 1200N and 500W and have rotted away. The storage west of the Lentz Coal Company is gone and the other is now used by Spencer Chemical.

David Dausman and the Billers were other big onion raisers. Henry Stieglitz and Elmer Thwaites were some of the more recent growers.

In onion raising the stakes were high. You could make a fortune one year and lose it the next. William Wedrick and Fred McKown bought many a carload of onions from local growers - - when onions were king!

"Onion" days in Nappanee were big events. Everyone had a patch and when the payroll checks were cashed by the parents for store items it was a boon to the economy. A nickle's worth of candy was "appreciated" by the kids.

A common saying was - - An apple a day keeps the doctor away and an onion a day keeps everyone away - - a known fact.

See you next week.

RECALL DIGGING OF 'NEFF DITCH' WEST OF MILFORD

(Third in a series)

By Kenneth Haney

In mushroom time in 1916 the island was nearly surrounded by water. It had rained off and on all day Sunday. That night there was a cloudburst and electrical display.

Thee Haab's barn burned with the loss of five valuable horses. It had been struck by lightning. The marshes were full of water from high ground to high ground, ranging in depth from one to four feet.

Digging the Neff Ditch

Enos Hollar told me the Neff ditch was dug by a "floating" dredge.

A boat was built near the bridge on road 500 or the corner of the George Losee farm. The wood-fired boiler, crane, and other equipment were then installed on the boat.

A hole was dug by the crane, the boat slid in the water and the present course was dug to Turkey Creek, near the back of Plomer Michael's farm.

The wood was bought from farmers who wished to cut and deliver to the boat.

The men cooked and lived on an extra boat towed along. The upper  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles were first dug by hand.

Mr. Hollar states that many times you could skate beyond state road 19 by crawling over a few barbed wire fences.

#### Hemp

When onions began to fade out of the picture because of insects, lower water level, and competition, a new crop came to take its place.

Hemp - - the bark or fiber from which gunny sacks, twine, and rope are made - - was soon to take over the marsh. This tough brushlike plant had no other competitor in growing. Seed drilled in the spring grew in thickness and height practically impenetrable. After cutting by machine it was tied by hand and put in tepee like shocks.

For a few years scores of negroes from Kentucky came in and separated the fibre from the reeds (woody part) by hand. This "line" hemp was put in 500 pound bales. As you cast your eyes over the tents and shacks west of Hastings and heard the singing of the men at work you would have said you were in "Dixie," if you had seen cotton instead of hemp.

Road 1050 was the main road to Hastings for them to get supplies. They were an agreeable people to have around. My, how we enjoyed their banjos.

In a few years a factory was built in Nappanee and much of the work was done by machinery. Many farmers spent their winters hauling hemp to Nappanee.

Locally, Ernest and Joshua Zimmerman had a factory on the back of what is now the Henry Stieglitz farm. It operated for several years on mostly local labor.

I never knew exactly what happened, some say the wrong kind of hemp, anyway "out of blue sky" the whole hemp business went "to pot" and many farmers lost their crop, labor and all. The stacks rotted or were burned.

Today we have this pesky stuff growing wild on ditch banks and fence rows under another name - - marijuana - - a narcotic.

#### Mint

And now spearmint and peppermint, which had been grown in small patches, came into their own. As most of you are acquainted with their culture I shall be brief.

In the early 1920's high winds and a late frost wrecked the mint crop. The price of peppermint went to \$28 a pound. Mason jars or jugs would hold most farmers' crop. One protected higher-ground-farmer sold 19 pounds at \$25 and could

have bought a "Tin Lizzie" (new Ford) with it. As usual some held for a higher price and still had theirs when it came down to seven or eight dollars.

Did the farmers quit? Not by a jugful! Many a farmer gives the mint growing credit for his success. As of today it looks like its going the onion - - hemp way.

Cabbage was grown in large amounts and delivered to Libby and McNeil at Nappanee (the sauerkraut factory) but a few years ago it moved out.

Pickles were grown on many acres, delivered to the Hastings store and hauled to Milford. The plant was located near the stockyards. I believe Ed Cain was manager.

Guy Lambert bought potatoes, carrots, and cabbage for Scott Company.

These are echoes of by-gone days. As you view this "Garden of Eden" today - - you say - - corn, beans and on to Florida.

#### Grandma Rumfelt

Many of us have been fearful that much of this early history would be lost with the passing of our elders. The following is taken in part from a history of the Oster family compiled by Mrs. William (Oster) Tusing, Mrs. Daniel Oster, and

grandma Susan (Oster) Rumpfelt in 1933:

Grandma Rumpfelt, with little formal education, but graduated from the school of "hard knocks", gives us a first-hand view of pioneer life. She was an inspiration in Christian living to anyone.

My father, William Oster, was born in Switzerland in 1820. My mother was born in Switzerland in 1827. In due time they came to America, met, and married in 1846 and settled in Ohio. I and my sister Elizabeth Marquart, were born here. They moved to Marshall county, Indiana, where John was born.

In 1850 they bought the 40 acres, where John Coldeberg's new house is located, from the government. It is near Hastings. They cleared the land and put up a rough unhewed log house. Later they hewed out the logs and built a better house. They were also pioneers of Island Chapel church, giving time, labor and money to build it. They were converted at a camp meeting near Bremen under Bishop Seybert. They would walk many miles to hear the Gospel preached - - an example for youth today.

In this log house, Samuel, William Jr., Emanuel, Daniel, Edward, Katie (Swartdlander) and Wesley were born. Wesley was born six months after his father died in 1870.

Two years later our house and all the contents burned.

All of the records of births and marriages and the family Bible were destroyed in the fire. With the help of kind neighbors another house was built and these same kind friends helped furnish beds, bedding, and furniture, and the family had a home again. Mother lived in her own home until all of us were married and went to her eternal rest in 1906.

I heard my mother say she walked nine miles three days a week to learn to read in Switzerland. She also told how they stopped the boat to bury her half-brother by the big canal on the way to America. This experience of death had a deep influence on mother.

After settling on the island, I saw the deer, wolves, and fox that had runways across our farm. Sometimes a bear was seen. We had to build tight pig pens for the little pigs to keep the fox from carrying them off.

We did our farming with oxen. After a time we bought a horse. Mother would ride this horse and carry baskets of eggs and butter to Clunette to get groceries. Often we walked and carried our produce to market.

She always knit wool stockings and sacks for her family. They would take the wool to the carding mills and have it carded. Then, she and we older girls would spin it into yarn. Father was a cobbler and made our shoes. We had fun on the



marsh ice fields with our homemade sled.

There were no schools near enough for us older children to attend and our book learning was very limited.

Later a school house was built at Hastings where the younger ones attended.

Mrs. Rumfelt passed to her reward about 1936 in the home where I now live. She left a better world than she found.

HISTORY OF HASTINGS  
LITTLE RED SCHOOL BUILT IN 1896  
(Fourth in a Series)  
By Kenneth Haney

The present little red brick school house was built about 1896. The bricks were made of clay taken from a pit one half mile west of Hastings.

The pit was owned by James Hollar. He burned the brick in his kiln and delivered them to the site. Catfish were taken from this pit until it was filled in later years.

A storm blew down the north gable end while it was under construction.

The old frame school house, which was about half the size of the present school house, was located to the west of it. It was moved across the road from the present one and used as a dwelling for a family who ran a blacksmith shop. Later it was torn down and some lumber used in the present house on the corner.

Old Picture

Mrs. Henry Biller has a picture of the 48 pupils of

Hastings school, taken in 1902 when Sam Weldy was teacher. Harvey Hartsough and Tom Blough had four years each preceding this.

A partial list of those pictured are Mace Hollar, Belle (Haney) Hollar, Henry Biller, Daisy (Tusing) Biller, William Tusing, Dora (Oster) Tusing, Walter Swartzlander, Arvilla (Jensen) Swartzlander, John, Clarence, Loren, Enos, Fremont and Irvin Hollar, Flossie (Poe) Irvine, Trella Rumfelt, Roy, Herbert and Arthur Tusing, Dora (Tusing) Leazenby, Lloyd Haney, Jesse Biller, Bessie (Biller) Davis, Bertha (Biller) Cunningham, Otho Oster, Grace (Oster) Barnhart, Glenice (Oster) Wagner, Tom Roberts, Delia (Roberts) Beach, Pearl (Roberts) Hepler, Edgar Swartzlander, Cora (Swartzlander) Rohrer and Amanda (Jensen) Dick.

School would start about September 15 and leave out about March 15 to April 1.

The school laws of attendance were none too strict. Hookey was common, and permits to work at home for a week or two could be obtained. These conditions and others denied regular attendance and some of the over age pupils were as large as the teacher - - many their first term.

When hiring a teacher, the trustee generally referred to the school as tough and what to expect - - maybe a "lickin." At least one pupil and teacher tangled, scattering books over the floor and knocking tops off the desk with kids scared, some "bawling," the melee finally ended in a "draw." Some of the older boys always had their strategy outlined for such an occasion!

The boys' cloakroom was entered by the right door and the girls' on the left. Several shelves were present in each for the dinner pails. Your shelf and also clothes hanger were determined by your size.

Nails soon replaced the broken coat hangers and a fallen cap was tossed in the corner.

Scaling these shelves you had a reserved seat for any program.

Between these cloak rooms was the teacher's desk. It also controlled the use of the old faithful pump and sink.

The seats faced south until some light expert said over the shoulder lighting was better and they were reversed. Teacher's desk was put on the north end as well as the black boards.

### 'Recitation' Bench

I nearly forgot to say the "recitation" bench was changed also. When teacher called for a certain class, a hop or two by the quickest boys nailed down the end positions.

Going to the dictionary, writing your lesson on the blackboard, getting your pencil sharpened, or making a trip outside to get some fresh air kept your joints from getting too stiff from sitting.

When a boy was one hundred per cent sure of the answer to teacher's question, he would snap his fingers (two ways) and reach halfway to teacher to beat his classmates to the draw.

The first day of school saw Junior with a new light dinner pail, book satchel, a two inch thick tablet (rough as toilet paper), a penny pencil and a reader, start for school. He was told how long pencil and paper had to last.

A little flare up on the way home from school and the dinner pail on top of the kid's head ruined its usefulness. Then, it was a gallon Karo syrup pail which would take lots of banging and still get the lid off with a nail.

I nearly forgot to mention that expert handwriting in those copybooks as teacher pushed our hands to make an

imitation. I never got being anywhere near perfect in writing but I soon learned to "copy" and had company.

### Morning Exercises

Every day we had morning exercises. Monday was Bible verses, most of the pupils had "Jesus Wept" memorized before the term was over. Some second grader would pick out an Old Testament verse with a large number of jaw breaking names and teacher would help the little fellow thru.

We'd sing favorites on Tuesday such as "Old Black Joe," "Dixie Land," Carry me Back to Old Virginia," and maybe ending by "Tentin Tonight." And when we'd come to "Many are the Hearts that are Weary Tonight, Waiting for the War to Cease" - a lump of patriotism sorta got in your throat.

Then the stories of Jacob Swartzlander and his hair raising stories of his Civil War soldiering would appear. That long flowing white beard was the sign of travel and adventure.

Story telling, jokes and riddles took their place in exercises too.

One morning the new teacher said we'd take calistenics. That floored us! We'd always been taught to watch out for big

words and fine print. Also, anything with a bad smell such as asafetida tied around your neck to soothe your nerves or bad tasting medicine such as quinine or castor oil would help you.

She said that was physical exercise. Now most of us could chin ourselves or "skin a cat" quite a few times but that would be embarrassing for teacher to show us and besides, where was the bar? She said we had lots of muscles we'd never used.

The first bell had rung and we ran most of the one and a quarter mile to school and had just gotten our second breath. Stooping, arms up, down, 1-2-3-4, was fun but we never felt those unused muscles come into action.

In those days kids made their fun -- couldn't buy it -- no money. At recess we played dare base, blackman, tin can, zippy, shinny, duch-on-rock, Andy over, baseball and later basketball. One boy went home with a broken collar bone -- the result of whip crack.

When school left out at Thanksgiving, teacher generally had testimony meeting to find out what they were grateful for -- to tell the truth -- vacation!

One boy said, "turkey." He had never tasted turkey in his life. Isn't that wonderful to be thankful that others can have things you can't afford?

At Christmas a sack of "hardtack" candy was appreciated because of its lasting qualities. Teacher must have gotten a five dollar raise per month as he scattered a bag of peanuts over the room. I don't know if he was demonstrating Darwin's survival of the fittest, or showing us how the anti-poverty program was going to work.

The last day of school, maybe a program, ciphering, a ball game with kids playing dads and a big dinner -- boy wasn't it good! That big round cake with white frosting and covered with red hots was out of this world.

A book for the head marks in spelling, maybe a few "roll of honor", a souvenir of teacher's picture and pupils' names and finally report cards and school was out.

We wished teacher would be back next year but she had her "practice" teaching and could leave janitor service, 30 to 40 classes a day for better pay, so we walked slowly home, happy to have known such a wonderful teacher.

### The Furnace

Probably the most memorable day was the one when several boys and myself arrived at school about seven o'clock. The boys were "fiddlin" with the furnace and filled the school room



with smoke that you could "cut with a knife." This was not unusual as the burning of Indiana coal made us smoke eaters. We sizzled on one side and froze on the other.

When the teacher asked if I had been in the basement I said "nope" and felt relieved for I had not monkeyed with the furnace.

As school left out my name and Allen Dierks and Roy Thaden were called to stay after school. As the other children left the room and went home I had a funny feeling.

The teacher started to sweep and when they were down the road a ways he stopped and went outside.

What should I do?

Judgement night was here. Why hadn't I hid behind the fifth amendment this morning? I was too small to put up a fight. There was no shingle to put in my pants and no extra overalls to put on.

I could tell him my dad would be up in the morning, but if you get a licking in school you get another one at home, squashed that. I could run home, but I had tried that when a stone fell from my hand and broke a window light and as I ran down the lane, I heard a voice say, "You'll be home for supper." I was!

I could play deathly sick -- I did feel sick, honest.

I was born 50 years too soon. If Bible reading had been banned I would have been innocent -- because I didn't know better.

Again you shouldn't punish a child while angry. That morning our old back cow stuck her foot in my pail of milk and the next second saw the bucket hit the barn siding. I just whispered in old Bosse's ear, "You're not in good humor this morning and I'm not either. Next week when we're both 'sittin on top of the world' we'll finish this." And she didn't object. Maybe teacher had heard of this new approach.

I had heard a political office seeker say, "it's a poor hide that can't take one tanning." After his defeat I found he had a "poor" hide. Did I have a good hide?

The quietness was killing!

As teacher came through the cloakroom with a hickory sprout (that had been growing several years) I was relieved.

He said, "You lied to me this morning" and applied that hickory oil with rhythm fit to kill while I performed the "twist" without practice. After a few minutes of this tornado, he stopped abruptly and said, "You may go now" and I took off for home. I felt I could not thank him from the bottom (of my heart).

In all seriousness -- 40 odd years later I met and thanked him for this lesson in life, and to this day have no love for untruthfulness. His reply was, "Surely you're not the clubfooted, pigeontoed third-grader I taught back in Hastings school?"

My heart goes out to these fine teachers who labored with low wages to raise knowledge and character to us who now travel this wonderful community.

See you next week -- in church.

## CHURCH HISTORY OF HASTINGS AS RECALLED

By Kenneth Haney

(Fifth in a Series)

One of the first churches was located to the right at the entrance to Island cemetery. The building was used as a church and as a school. It burned down and was never rebuilt.

The Primitive Baptist church was built before the turn of the century. The building (still standing) was last used for worship in the 1940's. Most of the people who worshipped here came originally from Virginia. Among the prominent families were the Prices, Tusings, Lathrops, Silveus, Esteps, McGowns, Rymans, Collins, and Hollars.

Services were held Saturday and Sunday about every two weeks. Elders Pittman and Ford are revered among others for their labors for the Lord.

Every year the people of this denomination would have a Baptist Association or convention. It was held in the woods in front of Russel Hollar's house and later in his woods. The faithful people would come from Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana in buggies for a spiritual retreat.

Although the church was closed from dwindling numbers these Christian people have left a great heritage to us.

Enos Hollar says he has attended the Hollar reunion in Virginia when the attendance varied from 200 to 500 people -- about like a fair. Now attendance is about like all family reunions. It seems like the younger group is not interested in family gatherings anymore. Why?

### Island Chapel

The Island Chapel church was built about 1875. Prominent families represented were the Dausmans, Pinkertons, Billers, Foxes, Geigers, Brunings, Haneys, and Swartzlanders.

One of the early ministers was the dynamic and eloquent "Little Wes" Pinkerton. He lived in the "Pinkerton Settlement" on the eastern end of the island.

Another minister, Rev. Rarry, held a revival service about 1900 when 40 people were converted.

Circuit riding preachers filled the pulpit at irregular times. These early preachers had a zeal for the Lord that marshes, mud, bad weather and hardship could not stop.

The expression "You can't pull yourself up by your own boot straps" was a common expression in sermons.

The story goes that a little boy got a new pair of red rubber boots, which he was very proud of. Everybody had a pair of rubber boots and they either had a strap or loop to pull

them on. This urchin soon went to the back of his father's farm to test them in the water.

He soon bogged down in the mire. He tried to pull his foot and one boot out and the other went deeper. As the water ran into the top of his boots he yelled for help. His father finally came and threw him a rope to catch hold of, but, he couldn't hold the rope and the boot straps at the same time. As he struggled he went deeper. Finally he let go of his boots, grabbed the rope and was pulled out of his boots to safety -- and then the pastor would say that the Gospel was just that simple.

The churchgoer would unload his family at the uncovered platform and then tie his horse at the hitching rack and blanket it, if it was winter, maybe using the horsehide robe used to keep warm in the buggy.

The porch had large cracks to let the dirt fall through and was the main entrance. The pulpit was on the east end of the church. Hard high backed seats were on either side with the men and boys on one side and the women and girls on the other.

Stoves furnished the heat and coal oil the light, with gas, Delco and REMC coming in that order.

One Sunday school report for January of 1900 says there

were a total of 40 males and females present and the collection was 37 cents.

Many of us can remember when David Dausman gave us a penny to put in the primary class Sunday school collection when we didn't have one.

A Sunday school convention would be held about every year in the George Roberts woods.

Every year the Evangelical denomination would hold camp meeting at Conkling Hill (Oakwood Park) for revival services. Just as the Baptist came from far and near so would these veterans of the Cross put forth a great effort to get to these services.

Oscar Haney remembers when two double buggy loads of people from Argos stopped one Sunday morning to water their horses at their home on the way to the "Hill."

These folks would pitch their tents and stay several days. In the big revival tents with sawdust isles many found a Christian experience. The slang expression "hitting the sawdust trail" was something to be proud of. At that time there was an entrance charge to the park.

## HASTINGS HISTORY - ISLAND CHAPEL CEMETERY

By Kenneth Haney

(Sixth in a Series)

The church and the "gravy" (grave yard) have always been inseparable. As a child I couldn't quite get the connection between "gravy" and a cemetery. You seldom heard the word cemetery in those days.

Because of the water level, the Island grave yard was located where it is.

C.R. Brittsan

Henry Heightsmith, a man with a long beard, was the first undertaker in Milford. These beards were a fad or custom from Civil War times.

In 1904 Mr. Keltner and Mr. Brittsan came to Milford from Ohio and took over the undertaking business from Mr. Heightsmith who moved to Michigan.

They also opened a furniture store in the Opera House block (southwest corner of Main and Emeline Streets). Because of ill health, Mr. Keltner sold out to Mr. Brittsan two years later. I give this information because Mr. Brittsan buried the



majority of the Islanders in his time - - as well as those in the Milford vicinity.

The pinto driving horse team or those beautiful black drivers owned by Jap Clem, the livery man, was a familiar sight. Mr. Clem's stables were near the back of the Myers Ford Agency. As Mr. Brittsan sat in the open beside his driver pulling the small black hearse, you were reminded of an early English coachman's picture. Many times Rev. W.E. Groves would accompany and preach the funeral sermon.

#### Questions

Why are people embalmed? Why are people buried in vaults? Why did people sit up at night to watch the dead? These are questions that puzzled me.

Using information from Mervin and Wade Mishler I will try and pass some information along.

I have been told people were found turned over when disinterred and some heard a tapping after they were buried and the corpse came alive -- so embalming made them sure dead or deader.

Now I'm told there is no state law requiring embalming; But it is up to the county health officers. There is a law requiring burial within so many hours if not embalmed. So, it seems the reason for embalming is for preservation of the body

and to kill the disease germs (especially the contagious ones). The law taking embalming from the home and to a licensed parlor was passed about 1940.

"Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return" says the Scriptures. With this in mind it looks foolish to put in vaults.

The grave was dug by neighbors or friends and the rough box consisting of inch or two inch oak was placed in the bottom.

After the pallbearers lowered the coffin (casket) into the box by leather straps, the top was covered with short boards. While the grave was being closed by the pallbearers, hymns were sung.

Many times, water was trickling in the grave at the time of burial. Sometimes ground hogs would bring up bones of the dead. There was a large mound of dirt at burial time and when the boxes and caskets decayed there was a depression. With the discovery of cement we have the answer. The result is our level, beautiful cemeteries.

Charles Sparklin was the first maker of vaults in the Milford community. His business was located on the W.R. Deeter farm - - where gravel was available.

The practice of sitting with the dead was a European custom. I am told it was to watch so rats, cats, mice, and

other animals would not harm the body. Sometimes cold water, ice, etc. would be used for preservation during the night. Superstition of the dead was another reason. When embalming in a licensed place came into being the night "vigil" disappeared and the funeral home came into being.

When death came into the community the church bell would be tolled (clapper hit on one side of bell) and folks would inquire who had departed. On the day of the funeral the bell would toll from the time the funeral train came into sight until the service started.

Pennies (they were larger than the ones today) were placed on the deceased eye lids to keep them closed. This was done soon after death. This is where the expression used to describe a dishonest man came into use - - "He'd steal the pennies from a dead man's eyes."

Most of the women dressed in black and wore veils. The obituary was always read in the services because it never came in the paper until the next week and I believe you then had to pay for its insertion. The names of the pallbearers were generally added. The epitaph was common on tombstones.

Bad Luck

It was bad luck to drive back over the same road on the

way to the cemetery so this was avoided. It was a bad sign to rain in the grave - - another one in the family would soon die. "A green Christmas and a white Easter makes fat grave yards" was a fearful saying. Don't be too critical! This unseasonable weather caused colds, flu, etc. and with no medical know how the death rate was high.

As I said before the Island cemetery with no income but donations was covered with briars, weeds, etc. which left it in a deplorable condition until its care and that of the Brumbaugh cemetery were paid by public taxation. It's a free public burying place.

Bert Irvine saw the condition of Island cemetery as he looked over the fence from his farm and determined to do something about it in the 1950's.

Enlisting the help of relatives of the deceased, he put his bulldozer to work to push out the brush and trees from the back part and leveled it off so it could be mowed.

John Kaiser gave a strip of ground so the drive way could be widened, graded, drained and graveled, so it's a public road.

A well was driven, a gravel drive around the cemetery made and the drives were all enclosed with a new fence. This was done by donated money and labor. A cemetery "fit for a king to

be buried in." "Those who honor the dead will respect the living."

Among those who helped in this worthy project were Enos, Ernest, Paul, and Russel Hollar, Henry and Royce Biller, Rudy and Otto Sierk, Lew Davis, Frank Charlton, Glen Pinkerton, Lawrence Dierks, and myself.

#### Tragedies on the Island

We have had our share of sorrows, too. My great-grandmother was killed by a sheep buck as she crossed the hill one half mile south of Gerald Charlton's farm. Gerald McDonald was gored by a bull about 1935 and Fred Wuthrich, Sr., met the same fate in 1921. Truly "You can't trust a bull any farther than can throw him by his tail." Mr. Wuthrich had purchased this white faced bull as a calf from Mervin Mishler about two years before.

Arthur Hall was buried beneath a load of tile in the bottom of the Neff ditch when a temporary bridge gave way in 1915. Berniece Spicher was burned to death. Billie Moore and several horses were killed by lightning just south of the old Milton Berger gravel pit about 1906. Aaron Slabaugh met death when run over by a wagon in front of the Hastings store about 1925.

Noah Estep was run over by a car in Ohio, and Mrs. Daniel Haney's life was snuffed out by a car on a South Bend street. A car accident caused the untimely death of Darell Kaiser on the Community Center road.

Farm tractor accidents took the life of William Sierk in 1946 and Glenn Baker recently.

Truly as we lay our friends and loved ones tenderly away, we look for a city whose maker and ruler is God.

#### The Gravel Pit

In regard to W.R. Deeter gravel pit now the Zimmerman pit. I recall when this hill reminded you of a Benton Harbor fruit orchard. After we had tied our horses across the road from what is now Dr. Rheinheimer's residence we started to pick those luscious red cherries from the loaded trees.

From our perch in the trees you could see the "mud" train loaded with its precious cargo and Tom Thumb engine wind its way toward the cement factory in Syracuse. It's load of marl had been dredged from the bottom of Waubee Lake.

Years later when I remember that "toot" "toot" of the choo! choo! as it crossed the country roads my conscience sort of pricked me. What he was trying to tell me was he was bringing me a better life. With the gravel under me and the

cement he helped to make, would come concrete roads, pavements, sidewalks, foundations, vaults, huge silos, and houses. Yes, he would pull our feet from the mud and miry clay and set us free. He would get rid of the rats by destroying board floors and breeding places. Truly, I should have saluted my choo! choo! train as he glided by. Thanks little engine for your help in making the Orn road concrete!

Years later, about 1919, a railroad hauled gravel from the gravel pit to a washing plant near the outlet, to Waubee Lake. The present beautiful beach and park came from the washed sand. Several acres of lake were filled up, getting rid of the old 'swimmin' hole. Where for years the young men of the community had enjoyed swimming in their birthday clothes.

COURTSHIP BY HORSE AND BUGGY IN HASTINGS AREA

(Ninth in a Series)

By Kenneth Haney

This is a ticklish as well as a loveable subject and I hesitate to try and write on my experience in automobile days. Therefore, I shall rely on those who were successful competitors for the lady's hand in the horse and buggy days.

I am reminded of some tourists who stopped at an Indian Reservation at noon and asked for the singing of "The Indian's Evening Love Song" and were refused. The Indian said it wasn't evening yet. So I am told it was necessary to have ideal conditions for the pursuit of a mate.

Most of the young men worked on the home farm or by the "month" for a neighbor, getting his room and board "thrown in." If he had a "driver" it was cared for also.

He was allowed to wash the buggy on Saturday afternoon and put some leather split washers inside the spindle and grease with lard or later on with "Black Beauty" or some other brand of axle grease. Then with the top folded down and with the blanket or robe cleaned he was ready for town.



The picture of their beautiful horse and buggy was the envy of many a young man. Notice the martingales, the high reining of the horse's head, the buggy whip, and I believe an "open" bridle as well as the road conditions.

#### The Ardent Suitor

With all the wiles of an ardent suitor the young man would try and persuade his intended companion to ride with him to her home. If in town he had to tell ma and pa she was going with him.

Sometimes he would single her out from a group walking home from church or a party. With the gallantry of a knight he would alight from his buggy after turning his horse to the right. With his lines (reins) in his left hand he would assist his girl with his gentle right arm to the buggy seat. Then, if the distance was short he would let the horse "poke" along or drove around the square to "kill" time.

There was no need for introduction because everyone was acquainted with each other. Most men got their bride within a few miles of their homes. So as in all small communities in those days everybody was related. With the advent of high school and college this has all changed.

Now, with more cordial relations established, regular trips to town, parties, and church became more frequent. With

birds singing in the branches above, bees humming, crickets chirping, a little red "piney" squirrel running along the rail fence, maybe a few small rabbits calmly sitting by the roadside, how could hearts beat otherwise but in unison.

With the lines wrapped around the dashboard, even the horse sensed the trust that was beginning to emerge in his youthful passengers. That one horse with horse sense was safer without a driver than 300 under the hood with one hand and divided attention!

Every school play was not complete without uncle Josh or some bashful boy trying to "pop" the question. His girl friend would keep "prodding" him for the invitation.

#### Motorcycles

At one time there were many motorcycles in Hastings. There was the "Indian" all painted red; Henderson; and then those twin cylinder Excelsiors, the speediest of anything on the road. Horses never got used to motorcycles.

Among those having motorcycles that I "faintly" recall were Roy Tusing, Roy Teeple, Austin (Jack) McKibbin, Roy Thaden, Chester Tusing, Jesse Biller, Leland Rohrer, and Henry and Arthur Biller.

This Harley-Davidson, single cylinder, flat belt driven, was used part-time by "Bill" Biller to woo Ella Waldsberger.

This one with no lights had to be pushed to get it started and then with a jump like getting on a galloping horse you landed astride the seat.

One night on the way home from Henry Dierk's he collided head on with a junk man. He narrowly missed the shaft, but tore the harness from the horse and it took off. As he lay "badly hurt" by the roadside, the excited peddler bent over him saying "are you deadt?" Are you deadt?"

Reminds me of a doctor telling me he was called out to a farm home where a small boy was killed when a horse kicked him. As the sad family quietly carried the lifeless precious bundle to the house the mother began to wail and say, "And just think, Johnny died without his supper."

One band concert night someone was trying to start a balky cycle just south of the band stand. Someone lit a match and the cycle caught fire. The Hastings fire department was soon put into action.

There were about a dozen kids around the machine and someone yelled "throw dirt" and with about two inches of dust that fire was "snuffed" out "pronto" and most of the kids looked like they had been on fire too as they missed the fire target.

### Getting Courage

After convincing his girl friend he was the only man in the world for her and getting courage to ask her parents' consent, they would make a flying trip to the justice of the peace or a minister.

Not too many "pomp" weddings, as many times their wages were collected by the parents for a girl to 18 and a boy to 21. They had little to start with.

The ceremony was much the same as today except I believe three things are now deleted. Do you promise to obey your husband? Do you take your husband for better or for worse? Is there anyone here who objects to this marriage, if not let him forever keep his peace? If these are not correct I welcome criticism.

### The Chivaree

After the marriage came the belling or chivaree, when all the young people came at night with shotguns, buzz saws, dinner bells, dishpans, washtubs, and what have you noisemakers.

After the shooting of guns, yelling and all the noise you could make for 15 to 30 minutes the happy couple was expected to invite you into the house and as you passed and congratulated them your name was written down and you were eligible for a cigar or candy treat at the Hastings Store. Oh!

as a kid I loved belling.

Sometimes the house was "guarded" to see that the "honeymooners" didn't escape.

Johnny Biller tells me several boys were delegated to watch the Jacob Fox residence to see that Mr. and Mrs. Don Fox didn't "fly the coop" when they got married.

The boys hatched up a trick that as one boy, the victim A, came around the corner of the house he would yell "There goes Foxy." With boy B several rods ahead they took up Enos Hollar's lane. B was caught by A several blocks away and when A discovered the joke on him, he was unhappy and angry for awhile. How would you have reacted?

#### Golden Anniversaries

I have attended quite a few golden wedding anniversaries of those we belled. As I have seen these wonderful pairs brave hard work, disease, death, privation, and the storms of life to bring up loving, obedient children and true to their wedding vows, I can only wish them many more years of such fruitful life. Yes, they married for "keeps."

In discussing marriage one girl said, "If we can't get along we can separate." Needless to say she was "dropped like a hot potato."

I am told that better food, the age of maturity comes several years earlier in youth physically. How about judgment and experience? When I see divorces involving two to 15 children in the paper surely something is wrong. Would a marriage counselor or semi-official judge investigation more thoroughly help?

Will there be no divorce proceeding by 1985 as the Supreme Court will rule that takes away Civil Rights and all will become common Law marriages?

A judge said there is no 100 per cent divorce on one party's part; it may be 10-90, 20-80, 30-70, 40-60, or 50-50, but not 100 per cent. I might add that's in any area of conflict or opinion. Would you agree? It is food for thought! We might sing that old negro spiritual, "It's me, It's Me O' Lord, Standing in the Need of Prayer."

TREES ON THE ISLAND AS REPORTED BY MR. HANEY

(10th in a Series)

By Kenneth Haney

As I write I meditate as I work. Many poetry gems come to memory, some being exact wording and others the gist of what the poet implies. One of these is "I think I shall never see anything as lovely as a tree" - - Joyce Kilmer. This is the

pleasure in writing this time.

As I said before trees made the early settlers' lives difficult but they were also a blessing. The Coppes Brothers and Mutschler woodworking factories used a large amount of logs from the Island. The Lentz saw mill also purchased many.

Many of these four feet to six feet "across the stump" (diameter) virgin trees were growing before the Revolutionary War. When these ripe trees were cleared, mushrooms popped up by the wash tubs full. The hollow logs were split into halves and boards nailed across the end made a watering trough or a milk trough where cold water kept the cream, milk and butter cool. Sometimes the butter, etc., were put in the well pit.

#### The Mud Boat

Another essential "tool" made from timber was the "mud" boat. It consisted of two flat runners "pegged" or bolted together. It slid well on mud, ice, or snow, but, was hard to control it from stopping or sliding side wise. It was transportation for the family, could be used for hauling manure, buzz poles, etc.

After getting these limbs of trees together the neighbors would help to cut in firewood lengths. These pole piles and holes in the trees and ditch planks were the chief places of protection for rabbits. I nearly forgot the fodder or corn

shocks. Rabbits learned to climb trees then, too. Where can he go for protection today?

### Rail Splitting

When I think of A. Lincoln with his wooden maul or sledge hammer driving wedges to split logs for rails or fence posts, I think of the enormous amount of energy it took - - more than a cup of coffee and a doughnut for breakfast. Hewing out barn timbers was in the same class.

Then, gathering hickory, beech, walnuts, butternuts and hazel nuts in the fall was fun. Cracking nuts by the box stove on a cold winter evening and picking out the "goodies" (kernels) shortened the evening. I would give several butternuts to anyone wishing to start trees this fall as I have a small tree in front of my barn.

Sometimes a swarm of bees would fly over while they were plowing corn or making hay. By throwing dirt or pounding on tin or metal you could get them to light on a bush and then transferred to a hive to provide a table spread.

Many times you would be lucky to find a "bee tree," a hive of bees in a hollow tree. After frost time man came along and took all their summer work and killed the bees. There was a saying a hive of bees in May was worth a ton of hay, if gotten in June a silver spoon, but one gotten in July wasn't worth a



fly.

In Proverbs 6-6 we read "Go to the ant thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise." With this thought in mind, except we change the word "ant" to "bee," I would like to introduce you to my friend Otto Beer.

First I want to say he doesn't need that. What I really want to say is that here amongst us dwells a high authority on bees. I listened attentatively to the "Lives of Honey Bees" at our Sunday school class party several years ago as Mr. Beer presented the subject.

Any school class, club or party that has never heard Mr. Beer surely is missing a rare opportunity on Christian living, good citizenship, integrity, industry and frugality as the bee teaches us a lesson.

While talking about natural sweets, lots of maple and sugar water was boiled down to make maple syrup in those early days.

#### Saw Mills

While talking to Dr. Owen Lentz. he stated his father, Ed Lentz, and family moved from the Darsh marsh at the corner of road 1200 N and 500 W to Milford about 1910. He went into partnership with his father, Albert Lentz, who owned a sawmill just across the street and to the south of the Lentz Coal

Company. This sawmill, I believe, burned twice.

Joe Griffith and Phil Caris were their teamsters, Isaac Mitchell and Tim Dygert were veteran log haulers from the Island. Monger's of Elkhart and Griffith were saw mill operators later in Milford.

Around Hastings William Tusing, Ira Collins, and Enos Hollar operated mills for many years. Sherman Collins had been and is still sawing at his home site.

Harold, son of William Tusing, has, along with his sons, operated the Dutchtown sawmill for many years.

On a cold winter morning while walking to school you would see a log hauler skidding logs to the roadside to be loaded on his wagon log bunks or bobsleds if the ground was covered with snow. Back in the woods you might hear the crash of a giant oak as it toppled to the ground. After placing the reins (lines) on the horses' hames the five command words - - gee, haw, gidap, back, and whoa - would direct that faithful team like trained circus horses while the driver was busy with the chains and logs. Most of these dumb animals were treated kindly by their masters. Each driver knew the limit of his team's pulling power and endurance. One man with a large team wanted everyone else to know he had the best pullers.

Now everyone should be proud of his work, but, it can be overdone. One spring day this man who had never been stuck (so he said) started for Nappanee with a load of logs. One log or one too large was the straw that broke the camel's back. He hadn't gone too many miles when the wagon dropped to the axles and with might or main she couldn't be gotten out. Along came neighbor X with a smaller team and a load fitted to the thawed-out road.

"Are you stuck?" he asked.

"Nope, just unable to move it," was the reply.

"I'll hook on in front and see what we can do."

The large load was soon pulled to solid ground and Mr. X thanked him for his help. Then the man said, "If it hadn't been for my big team, we'd never pulled it out." How right he was!

#### Classified Forests

When I was a boy from 30 to 40 per cent of the Island was covered with forests and now we nearly cut the zero off.

I have heard it said many times, "My woods will last me," with no thought for future generations. I have always loved woods so I have had mine "classified." To do this all livestock is fenced out, and the forest is "farmed" or

undesirable trees, vines etc., are cut.. Selected trees are cut as they mature.

There is a two cent an acre tax. A good "farmed" woods will produce 300 board feet of lumber a year or about \$14 yearly income per acre.

A few more classified forests and less bulldozing would help this farm surplus some and bring pleasure to future generations.

I love to take Ronnie and Gary Cotton, my grandsons from Pierceton, to my woods. Yes, there on that beech tree is the notch to show their height in 1961, 1963, and 1964.

Oscar Haney and I went "prospecting" (rambling) in my woods one Sunday afternoon in May. After going part way through we sat down on a fallen tree.

As that soft southern wind rustled the tree leaves and with birds flitting and singing all over the place, our little dog scared a bunny from the underbrush. With this peaceful scene of nature Mr. Haney mused, "If heaven is as nice as this I'll be satisfied."

I sometimes wonder if people in general aren't too much inclined to have silver and gold to pave the streets with over there, rather than enjoying much of God's beauty here.

OLD HASTINGS BAND; LIFE OF COMMUNITY

(Eighth in a Series)

By Kenneth Haney

The Hastings band was formed in the early teens and was the life of the community for about a decade.

Under the efficient direction of Ziler Grove many happy day and evening concerts were enjoyed. A platform was erected in front of the store with single gas lights hung at the corners of the stand. Folks from all parts of the Island gathered on Wednesday evenings to enjoy the music and do their trading.

The first practicing was done above the store. Later the building to the south of the store, occupied formerly by Claude Weimer's barbershop, was moved to the east side of Enos Hollar's lane and used until the band was discontinued. It was put as near the road as possible to take advantage of the precious gravel.

The band sponsored the Hastings Big Days which included a ball game (I'll tell about this later), sack races, bicycle races (both short distances and around the two and a half mile Hastings square), pie and watermelon eating contests (with your hands tied behind you back), nail driving, foot racing, etc. I

can't remember any grease pole climbing or catching the greased pig.

There were horse races (local horses) from the church to the store. Their "sulky" was made from the front axel and wheels of a buggy. Lew Davis, John Hollar, John Brock, Alex Hollar, and Charlie "Sigh" Hollar were some top contenders.

There was also an eating stand to help make money to pay for prizes along with homemade ice cream socials occasionally.

Allen Dierks recalls when the above picture was taken, Orville Yeager was driving his Model T nearby. A "fractious" horse became unruly and in the excitement Mr. Yeager pinned Allen's father, Henry, against the bandstand near the school house and injured him severely.

#### Boys were Boys

Boys were boys then, too! One night the rear Ziler Grove's "Flivver" was lifted up and blocks put under the axel.

In those days when you came out of a building it was always dark (no artificial light unless you had a kerosene lantern sometimes called a "Smutsiagger.") Mr. Grove came out to his car, "twisted her tail", and got in. He put it in low, pulled down the gas and with a "roar" he just sat there with the kids standing at a distance viewing the spectacle.

Mr. Grove, a quite friendly man, took it good naturedly. He was a man you couldn't help but admire.

#### Clay Pigeon Shooting

In the fall there was the clay pigeon shooting or trap shooting to raise money. The Tusing, Biller and Hollar boys were good at this target practice.

When a rabbit took off as they went out hunting it didn't have much of a chance. When rabbits were sold a little profit could be realized.

With me, and I had lots of company, the ammunition cost too much for sales, unless the game just died from fright.

When I think of these band boys with their diligent practice and their efforts to bring entertainment to an otherwise drab atmosphere, surely they were a wonderful booster to our early community.

When I think of the present band opportunities which we support by public taxation and which we were deprived of, how grateful this generation would be for its opportunity, with Milford High School only five miles away.

I was told if you furnish your clothes, your books and your way, you can go. Many of you folks could say the same thing in this or other realms of your life.

The dole never made good citizens.

Earning your bread by the sweat of your brow or the poor ye shall have with you always will soon be out-moded by the anti-poverty crusade.

#### The Ball Team

About 1903 Hastings had a baseball team that was tops. With Alex Hollar as pitcher and Charlie Geiger as catcher or Jack and Butch Kline as the battery, they weren't afraid of Nappanee, Milford, Gravelton, Foraker and others.

"Coon" Earl Biller and "Sigh" Hollar were sometimes relief pitchers. Others on the team were Lew and Otto Davis, Enos and George Hollar, "Flick" Sam Biller and Claude Good. Henry Biller was water boy.

Two prominent Oldtimers were Charlie and Vern Wysong, who played on the Nappanee or Gravelton team.

The baseball diamond, which was a good one for that day, was located against and to the southeast of Emma Biller's woods.

Many a hard hit ball had to be retrieved from the mud in the far outfield. You never could hit the ball out of the park, but there was a possibility of never finding the ball.

Later on a second generation with indoor ball enjoyed the same kind of rivalry with surrounding communities and seldom were at the bottom of the "Totem" pole.



## EARLY THRESHING IN HASTINGS COMMUNITY

(11th in a Series)

By Kenneth Haney

When I think of wheat and oats threshing in the early days on the Island the word "precious" seems to stand out. In the fall, winter wheat was sown and if it survived the "Hooving" of the spring thawing you might get a 15 to 25 bushel average yield.

Fertilizer was unknown until that old standby 2-12-6 came into use.

Oats were sown by hand which was the Bible times way or by a mechanical broadcaster and disked or harrowed in. In this virgin soil, or "new ground", oats made a fairly good yield.

Harvest time and the McCormack or Deering binder cut and tied the bundles of grain and dropped them in piles to be shocked.

A good job of shocking withstood the wind and rain very well, but, a poor job looked like a tornado had struck the field.

There were few threshing machines at first and much grain had to be stacked or hauled into the barn to be threshed later in the season.

### One of the First

One of the first threshing owners around Hastings was Joe Estep, He was the son of Sam Estep, Hastings store owner, and the father of Cleo, Gale, and Gladys (Mrs. Ted Baumgartner). Gale, a likeable young chap died soon after the family returned from Florida one spring.

Mr. Estep owned the Robert Hollar farm before he moved to Milford. It seems to me he owned the threshing "rigs".

He was one of the first owners of an automobile around Milford. Mrs. Haney recalls he took the cooks and children on their first auto ride after dinner one day. What a thrill!

After Mr. Estep, John Kaiser threshed on the Milford-Hastings road and the South Jefferson Threshing Company took the territory from the Albert Krull farm northwest to the David Deisch (Richard Hollar) farm. It was a large shareholder company and sometimes threshing in a wet season wasn't completed until late August. A wet season sure kept a farmer on edge.

Others who operated machines on the fringe were Frank Heiber, William and Jacob Hartter (Harter?) and Frank Heplers and his boys in the west end. Some of those who helped to operate these machines were William Murphy, Tom Sumpter, Clarence (Sox) Hollar, Butch and Jack Kline.

### A Typical Day

On threshing day mother and father would be up at 4 a.m. Father milked the cows and got the horses harnessed while mother was baking pies and getting things ready for dinner. The neighbor women would come early to assist.

There was wood or coal to be loaded on the mudboat, neighbors to be notified if they were to haul bundles, haul grain or pitch. There were cattle or hogs to be shut up and gates opened.

If chicken wasn't on the menu there was a quick trip to Henry Erick or Dave Hill's butcher shop at Milford for beef. As you looked into those ice coolers filled with fresh meat in those hot days my how your mouth "watered" (saliva)!. Canned meat or salted pork wouldn't be used today for dinner!

A threshing crew of four, eight bundle wagons, five pitchers, and three shovelers along with the cooks and children took a lot of beef, noodles, applesauce, tapioca, dessert, pie and cake, etc. Everyone tried to get to the first table although there was generally enough to eat.

The crew had pulled the outfit from the neighbors farm last night after dark with two oil lanterns as lights. Old Coaly, as the steam engine was familiarly called, was fired up early and the whistle blowed to call all helpers to come.

Maybe a whistle from another machine saying "good morning" could be heard in the distance. There was a code of whistles for bundle wagons, grain wagons, water wagon, etc.

One morning the whistle struck and blew for several hours. Blowing the whistle of a steam engine still tingles my spine!

Old Coaly, loved to drink water, and leaking flues and the steam valve popping off were taboo with the water wagon boy. With water in ditch it wasn't too bad but to use water from the local farmer's water tank wasn't appreciated especially if the wind mill wasn't running.

Some of the straw was put in the barn and how I envied any boy who could throw this bedding down for the cattle or horses.

Many farmers made a pole shed and covered it with straw and around three sides for shelter. A good job of straw stacking was appreciated when bedding cattle and horses in the winter. Empty barns, useless in this automatic age, were valuable in those days and really appreciated.

I, like other boys, carried water to the thirsty men for my dinner. Sometimes a generous farmer gave me a nickle or dime bonus.

With a crockery jug, weighing as much as the water it held, you kept making the rounds of the stubble fields, barefoot regularly.

To drink from a jug from which a man with a big "cud of Tobacco" had just drunk was hard on your stomach. To have a man give the jug a flip of the jug to wash off the bacteria from mouth made your heart sink. But to have some man say, "This water tastes like----, did you get it out of the horse tank?" Made you feel like going home.

As you sat at that dinner table loaded with good food those wonderful cooks had prepared, you forgot those unpleasant words on those hot days!

Threshing lasted until after dark and then cows to milk and late to bed. Both mother and father would be all in but their "shoe strings." Supper as well as dinner was given to the help in those days.

Dad's day of freedom came when junior was about 15 years old. He was big enough to drive a bundle wagon this year and had joined the ranks of the "men". Just a few years earlier he had graduated from Sunday "knee britches" (breeches) to long pants.

With his team and wagon he drove into the wheat field. He was warned to "bind" the load well. After getting on a "jag" he asked the pitcher how it looked and got a nod of approval that it would "ride". As he drove that steel tired wagon up

the lane one wheel dropped in a mud hole and he felt the load "shift" (slide). His heart weakened as he saw the load's rectangular shape had changed.

By dropping the speed to "supper low" and holding his breath he figured he could make it to the machine. But luck was against him! As he neared Old Coaly one corner slipped off. He drew the belt side of the separator and drove too close. As the belt screeched against the bundle butts, the man tending the separator yelled to get the load away and those were precious inches.

To make matters worse, the wind was strong and he had the dirty side. With that divider board in the feeder it was hard to throw the bundles head first in and about every other one fell on the ground. Every time his fork clanked on the feeder there was one sheaf less on the wagon.

Finally after a super human effort he got his "shirt tail" load of "topped out for rain" off and he became a man! And, life for day became easier.

One night I went to the straw stack and killed about 40 English sparrows who had burrowed into it for nesting. They were given to my neighbor lady who made a "pot pie" from the breast. She said this was a delicacy in her native state of Georgia.

Wheat was traded for flour at the mill and mother would bake those large brown loaves from it. Perfection, Gold Medal, and Vesta were common brands. Vienna was made in Milford, but, when World War I started I was told the name had to be changed, because it was the capital of Austria-Hungary.

WASH DAY RECALLED BY HASTINGS WRITER HANEY

(12th in a Series)

By Kenneth Haney

A week end spent, holy and true, and you won't worry of Monday blue.

This just about sums up wash day of early times and today.

Breakfast over, the copper wash boiler was filled with water and put on the old wood range stove. In those early days many of the clothes were "boiled" and then lifted from the boiler with a broom stick. Then, with the application of some "soft soap" they were rubbed on the zinc washboard and then put into a tub of water where a few squeezes of the bag of "bluing" seemed to bring out that color on the clothes.

After twisting the clothes or running them through the hand-turned wringer they were ready for the clothes line in the front yard or hanging on the picket fence.

As those clean clothes tossed to and fro in the gentle breeze a feeling of pride came into a woman's heart.

Truly the coming of the hand and then power washing machines were a God send to our hard working mothers. Those washboard hands were a far cry from the many hand lotion ones



of today.

### 'Soft Soap'

"Soft soap" was made by filling the old salt barrel with wood ashes and pouring water over them. The backing water was caught and boiled to the density that would float an egg.

This solution saved the money that would be necessary to buy Red Seal lye. After adding fats such as tallow, meat fryings, old lard, etc., and boiling, you had soap.

There was a common saying that "flattery" was like soft soap or it was about half lye (lie).

The early settler also found if you planted cabbage seed after burning a brush pile you would get thrifty plants. Potash wasn't known by name but these people knew what it would do.

### Butchering

One of the delightful days was butchering. That was the day to play hooky from school.

When you were called to get up before daylight the big iron kettles were filled with water and the fire beneath was crackling and sending out its glow in the darkness.

One of the custom butcherers, Wesley Charlton, Martin, or later Orville Lutes, Isaac Tusing, Sylvanus Mellot, among

others, had set this day to do your job. Maybe a neighbor or two would come to exchange with you.

From four to eight hogs were commonly butchered. Head cheese (sort of Brunsweiger), side meat (bacon), pig souse (from hocks and ears) or hog knuckles and sauerkraut, patty cakes or linked sausage, a piece of tenderloin dropped in the boiling lard or some fresh "cracklings" from the pressed out lard. These along with ham brought the saying of "eating high on the hog."

Canning or salting ended the preserving process along with some hickory smoking.

One day a peddler told me that in Greece they covered the hog with straw and set it afire. I'm willing to try anything once. If I hadn't gotten scared and put out the fire because I thought it was cooking the hog, it would have been successful but as it was I had a mess.

My brother, Foy, and family of Mount Prospect, Illinois, haven't gotten butchering out of their systems yet!

The present lean hog is a far cry from the 10 to 12 month lardy hog of the Island settlers.

With 20 to 40 gallons of lard, a bin of potatoes, wheat for flour, plenty of meat and canned fruit, and a wood shed

full of dry hard wood, you were ready for a cold winter and visiting with neighbors on those long evenings.

#### Sorghum

Sorghum or "cane" was raised for molasses. It was a variety something like now used for silage. The leaves were stripped from the stalk before frost.

After cutting and tying in bundles they were hauled to Mr. Hamman at Milford, Enos Hollar or Eli (Daddy) Hershberger to crush and boil.

For spreading on bread, molasses cookies, cakes, etc., it was an important food.

#### Apple Butter

In those early days nearly everyone had an orchard and strange to say many of the diseases now that are common were absent or caused little trouble.

With two or three 50 gallon barrels and a load of apples you went early to the cider mill. After waiting in line an hour or so you would get the juice pressed from the apple.

After arriving home this apple cider was boiled down in a copper kettle to about one-twelfth its original volume. Into this preservative was poured the "snits" or parts of peeled apples which the neighbors had helped do the night before. From 15 to 25 gallon crocks full of tarty applebutter was

common and wow, was it ever good!

#### Taxes

That old saying, "There's only two things sure -- death and taxation." I've heard it many times. Many taxes are levied for an emergency -- like the income taxes, but, they're so easily collected that they are never stopped.

Showing the tax on 36 acres of land, which I own, was \$11.35 for a year. It is dated April 28, 1904. On April 12, 1933, the same land was taxed at \$15.24 for a year. This was when we used up the surplus when we didn't build a new school building.

In the spring four neighbors would each put a team on the large road grader to fill those large axle deep mud ruts. On that smooth flat surface, in April bare footed, it seemed you could "fly" down the road!

In the fall with a pair of basswood "dumpboards" cut out at Lentz saw mill you would haul your levied number of yards of gravel for your "land" tax.

This along with several neighbors would make a distance of two blocks a year or so. After walking in mud the majority of the way home from school you felt like you were walking on the kings highway, even though it was a short distance.

Most of the early gravel was taken from the Orn gravel pit where Clarence Stieglitz now owns. The Moor or Berger pit furnished the west end - gravel. Sometimes cutting brush or mowing the roadside was land tax.

The ditches were dug by allotment. You were given a certain distance to clean out, generally in the fall. Some did a poor job and these ditches were unsatisfactory.

The next step was when you paid your assessment or tax and one man did the job. The road supervisor for a section of township was taken by the township trustee which was better. Finally the county highway and a gasoline tax brought us our fine gravel and blacktop roads.

Now, with the new drainage laws going into effect we hope it will be an improvement to the past tho we face it with misgiving.

With only a teacher to pay and some fuel and a little repair there was little tax to pay for schools.

So with poor roads, poor drainage, poor schools and low taxes, advancement was slow. Should one kick on taxes? Not if well spent! We got just about what we paid for.

DISEASE ON 'THE ISLAND' AS REMEMBERED BY MR. HANEY

(13th in a Series)

By Kenneth Haney

As I walk through the Island cemetery or other cemeteries a feeling of sadness comes over me. Here is a family tombstone and maybe one to four markers with angel carvings of infants who failed to survive birth.

Here lies a young mother who died while the husband went to get a midwife, there lies a schoolmate who was the victim of appendicitis, another one died from whooping cough and still another from membranous croup or choleral infantum.

Then I think of my little miracle grandson -- born two and a half months prematurely with the lowest weight at one pound, five and one-half ounces. At 21 months he is a normal child weighing about 30 pounds.

And so as I write these comments it is with thankfulness for the medical discoveries that have come in my lifetime. Under no circumstances is this a criticism of any of our parents or forefathers. They did the best they knew how.

When I read and hear of the medical needs of the people of undeveloped countries I think of the not too distant past when we were in the same "boat".

First of all it was the time of "patent" medicines and "quack" doctors. Everyone, especially the unscrupulous had a cure for everything. And, when you are sick and don't know what to do you'll try anything. Another thing there was a common belief among many that sickness was the result of sin. This argument I've heard many, many times.

The following are advertisements of 1898:

A. This is the only non-alcoholic, invigorating beverage. It cures all stomach and heart trouble, regulates the bowels and appetite, strengthens both the muscular and nervous system.

B. When you use Sarsaparilla you get rid of pimples, boils, eruptions and scrofula. It is the best tonic for the nerves and regulator for the stomach, liver and kidneys and gives you new strength and vigor.

C. This one restores your appetite, gives you restful sleep, perfect digestion, quiets your nerves and brings back new energy.

How do these stack up with the hundreds of medicines which are on a drug store shelf? Thanks to the Pure Food and Drugs act many wild claims have been stopped.

### Early Settlers

When an early settler built his home it was on the highest spot of his farm -- many times up a lane from the road with the house higher than the barn. Many had dug wells until, they could have a driven one. Many times these open wells were polluted from run off water from toilets, etc., and other filth. Dysentery and typhoid fever were common.

Flies from manure piles and garbage swarmed everywhere. Fly traps, Daisy fly killers, and sheets of waxy fly paper helped some. Sometimes the screen door would be thrown open and the waving of cloths would drive out the flies from the room. Some thought cotton pieces on the door would keep the flies away. My what a blessing the modern fly killers are!

And with night would come those hordes of mosquitoes from the surrounding marshes and undrained holes as well as the old rain barrel used to collect rain or soft water. Many suffered from the "ague" or chills, which was a form of malaria.

Some of those blood sucking insects seemed about as big as elephants. Mosquito "netting" was commonly used on the windows. High room ceilings were healthy but night air was considered unhealthy so the windows were closed at night.



Physiology was taught but later hygiene and teaching was a big step forward. Language or English, which took the place of Grammar, was a big improvement too in the schools.

#### A Cold

When you got a cold or cough you took cough drops, liquid cough medicine or some other concoction that generally had a high alcoholic content. You then soaked your feet in hot water, rubbed your chest with liniment and lard (some brave soul used skunk grease), covered it with a scratchy wool flannel and went to bed. What a blessing flu shots or penicillin would have been!

And then when a child failed to grow or you didn't know what was the matter you might have "flesh decay" and you would be taken to be "measured". After some sort of "pow wow" by a person who couldn't "charge" you might get better. A child who was born with a deformity was believed to have been "marked" before birth.

Probably the most lingering of all diseases was consumption. Very few ever out grew this disease and it took a heavy toll of lives. This heavy damp foggy weather from the marshes helped the disease. Consumption (consuming) is now known as tuberculosis and thanks to the modern methods of

detection and cure it is not hopeless. Who ever heard of "vitamins" then?

With the coming of pasteurization of milk, along with refrigeration of foods, the problem of bacteria in foods has been largely eliminated. And, with these have come baby formulas and this brought mothers from the slavery of breast feeding which was needed in early days.

Probably the "flu" epidemics of World War I took more lives than any one year. There was hardly a well person to care for the rest of the family. Many pregnant mothers lost their lives with this killing disease.

If we had had the hospital and medical facilities we now have back in 1900, we probably would have a four to 5,000,000,000 population now.

With all these modern methods and conveniences how happy we should be. Yes, we should be willing to share with other unfortunate peoples our blessings through CROP this fall.

P. S. I don't want to leave the impression that sin and intemperance do not have "price tags" on them.

See you next week.

ROCK ON LIBRARY LAWN HAS SPECIAL MEANING TO WRITER

(14th in a Series)

By Kenneth Haney

As I pass that large lone rock on the corner of the Milford Public Library lawn my thoughts turn again to the Island.

Sorry, but I'm mistaken, for on it are placed the names of the soldier boys of World War I and if these men gave their brave exploits in battle it would fill many books of adventure. As I look over the names of many of these I knew as a lad, surely I would say, "This rock holds the hallowed names of our defenders and is not 'lonesome'."

This stone was deposited by glacier action on the Mose Hershberger farm on road 1100N (now owned by Jonas Yoder).

About 1914 Mr. Hershberger used his Mogul farm tractor, assisted by a team of horses, to pull this huge stone from the field and place it along the road in his front yard. This was the first two-cylinder, 16-horse, two-plow tractor with steel lugs that I saw on the Island.

On a white background on this rough stone was scribbled in red paint the Bible verse, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

Buggy horses "shied" away from that object like kids from a cemetery on Halloween.

#### The Stone Is Moved

When Joseph Baumgartner spear-heading the move, the Ancil Geiger Post of the American Legion of Milford (Mr. Geiger, who lived the first house south of Island Chapel Church, died at Camp Custer, Michigan, of the flu) moved this big "darnick" to its present location.

And now with some help from Dr. Hugh Snyder, who came to the Milford community from Silver Lake and has been one of our outstanding citizens for about 40 years, I'll proceed. Onions growing and associated with the Geiger boys, as in those days, his life has been varied and not always a "bed of roses are ease" as was a common saying.

With that old vehicle, the mud boat, and probably four horses, James "Jim" Long, with some help from Ortie Leemon, the local blacksmith, this memento was slid on the snow the seven miles to its final resting place on the library lawn.

The Legion sold guesses as to the weight of this stone to raise money. Somewhere in the records of the Legion is this information. A fair guess might be three to 4,000 pounds.

Mr. McDougal of Goshen dressed the stone down and the bronze plaque was installed with meticulous care. In getting

all the names put on one was omitted. It was put on extra. Whose is it? I think this project was in the middle twenties. I welcome help.

When I think of these men who risked their lives for our liberty and who wanted to live their lives "under the fig tree in peace" the same as you and I, it makes your temper rise at these anti-Vietnam marches.

The pattern is the same, the Japanese took to go south in World War II. In the time it took to tell it -- it spread all over the south Pacific.

There is a saying, "The first mistake is yours." Most folks feel that we should quit throwing money away on give away projects and concentrate on our job ahead with all we have!

I wish I had time now to tell you of blacksmithing with Bert McCloughen, Amy Hollar and Sherman Locke. Also a true battle story of the Battle of the Marne, France. But my time is running out.

#### The Truth

I met my friend Amy Hollar on Main street just a few days before his last trip to the hospital where he died.

Out of a "Blue" sky he accused me of not telling "all" the truth. I was taken "aback" and expressed my apology. He went

on to say, "You didn't tell the people my father, James Hollar, walked all the way to the Island the first time he came out from Virginia. You did not tell them I walked two miles to the Hastings school and did the janitor work for five cents and then I got a raise to six cents a day."

Now I'm going to tell you in the remainder of these articles some of the things you readers told me I missed.

Probably one of the things that make most parents sad, including myself, is our inability to have done for our little tots what we would like to have done. And yet, it may have been for their best interest.

As I sat with a sorrowing husband whose wife lay dead in a casket near us he had this testimony: "I feel bad to think I hadn't the money to buy her electric appliances, automatic washers, gas heat, nice clothes, anything in modern living."

"We were as poor as 'Job's turkey' and with our family, she was a true mate in rearing our children and feeding them. Oh, if I could have just provided them in those trying times of our early marriage."

Maybe you think I overplay those hard times, but, anyone who has had these experiences will never get used to this "cradle to the grave" security. "Sweet are the uses of

adversity ..." says William Shakespeare.

See you next week.

HASTINGS WRITER QUESTIONS MEMORY  
(15th in a Series)

By Kenneth Haney

Can you identify the following names?

1. Milk Shake
2. Frog Pond
3. Pig Island
4. Lick Skillet
5. Vittles

Talking about telling the truth last week reminds me that it is sometimes elusive and changeable. I also want to say I'm no psychologist or theologian, although I have had some college courses on them.

As a preface to this story I wish to remind you that people's makeup are slow to change. You be the judge!

I probably heard the following story as a lad sitting on a nail keg in the Hastings store:

In the 19th century there lived on the Island two fine neighbors whom we'll call Bill and John. Both were wonderful husbands, loveable individuals, and had hearts as "big as an ox" when it came to helping anyone in need. Kinfolk and nearly everyone would admit they had no enemy in the world.

Bill had a short-coming of not being too good a listener



or rememberer and sometimes added or subtracted from what gossip he heard which sometimes caused some friction in the neighborhood. But we'll say it was not intentional.

One morning John was splitting rails from logs and building a fence along a road. It was one of those off-days we are subject too! I don't know whether it was the weather, or his wife failed to have sausage and pancakes (which stuck to your ribs) for breakfast.

As he saw Bill, his neighbor, come on a full gallop down the tree lined road, he thought of an unkind and false remark or story that Bill was supposed to have made him and his temper rose.

He said he wouldn't believe Bill "one a bet!"

With a whoa and a sudden stop Bill passed the time of day saying "good morning, neighbor." His only reply from John was, "Tell me another one, I won't believe you!"

With the drop of his head Bill said, "I'm sorry but my mother-in-law, who lives with us, died last night and I'm going to get the undertaker." With a gid-ap and break-neck speed he took off on his mission towards town.

As John worked along his conscience began to bother him. Yes, he had acted like a kid in answer to a cheery greeting. Yes, with death in the home he had just increased his friend's

burden and in such situations tenderness and sympathy are needed more than ever. As he mulled over these thoughts of asking penitence and forgiveness he quit early for dinner.

As he told his good wife of what transpired she agreed that he had said the wrong thing and should make amends. After dinner they dressed up and with a desire to help their sorrowing neighbors and "patch up" their differences by asking forgiveness they started.

On the way over they stopped at several neighbors to tell them of the death of Bill's mother-in-law. And, each was soon getting ready to go and do what they could in this hour of bereavement.

When Mr. and Mrs. John arrived at Bill's home they were eating dinner. With a melted heart John asked for forgiveness for what he had said in the morning. He went on to say, "I won't make such statements again."

Just then the mother-in-law came from the living room to the kitchen. John turned to Bill and said, "You big liar. You ----" and all Bill said was, "You asked for it, didn't you?"

And John remembered his morning greeting, "Tell me another one, I won't believe you!"

He did believe Bill.

### The Answers

Have you identified the names? See how many you had right.

1. The Milk Shake was a local train from Garrett to Chicago on the Baltimore and Ohio that hauled milk and local passengers every morning.

2. Frog Pond was a school house east of Waubee Lake.

3. Pig Island was a large hill on the southwest part of the Henry Stieglitz farm.

4. Lick Skillet was the nickname for the Mt. Tabor School.

5. Vittles was another name for food in the early days.

### More That I Forgot

And now, some more things I forgot to tell you.

Victor Yeager told me that the road and marsh west of Hastings was a big sea of mud and water as he went home from a date after a big rain. Someone asked why he and Berlin became preachers and his reply was, "I guess my father, Charles, prayed it on us." What a wonderful compliment to a parent.

Chloe (Tusing) Stone reminds me she won the baby beauty contest conducted by the Hastings Band at one time.

Our pastor, R.R. Wilson, carried water barefooted in Michigan to the men threshing. As he tossed the big jug on the

wagon it missed and fell and broke his big toe, which wasn't corrected.

My father, Peter Haney, was cutting marsh hay with a scythe when a rattlesnake bit his big toe. A drink of whiskey served as an antidote to counteract the poison and saved his life, but the toe was deformed.

Rudy Sierk reminds me of the big flocks of prairie chickens that roamed the marshes during the hemp growing period and have now vanished.

Dick and Ed Hepler reminded me they hauled hemp from the Graham Marsh to Pierceton.

Harvey Hollar says he was a Milford Mail salesman from birth. A free subscription to the MM by Jack Forbing caused his father Erasmus to become a subscriber for many years.

Otho Oster, Gonstantine, Michigan, remembers Jacob Swartzlander telling how he accidentally dropped his lighted pipe in a powder room in the Civil War. He said he had to do a lot of tramping to put out the fire.

Vern Dausman of Oswego reminded me of a driving horse named either Dan or Dan Patch, owned by his father, Samuel, that was one of the fastest on the Island. It was always a question with me whether Mooney, owned by Grandma Rumfelt, or Dan was the faster. He also reminded of the time his Grandpa

was pickpocketed in the Chicago Stock yards for \$40. As a child he said it sounded like a million dollars! It was a lot of money then.

Talking of pickpockets, a gypsy lifted Earl Biller's purse for a considerable amount one day.

Henry Biller reminds me that John Dillinger, robber and killer, stopped and asked for road directions from him while in his front yard just a few days before he held up the Warsaw police station and escaped with guns and ammunition.

This was not long before he was betrayed by a woman dressed in red and shot and killed by Chicago police as he emerged from a theatre about 1933.

I forgot to say I was sitting on a threshing machine separator blower on my birthday. A new pair of overalls, given me as a present, caught in a cog. After the machine was stopped my one pant leg was cut off above the knee. A close birthday call!

William Murphy told of a horse losing its tail in a separator belt and subsequently ran away. A gruesome sight.

Tom Roberts was a local engineer for many years in the community and I forgot to mention him.

HASTINGS RESIDENTS HAD A FEAR OF GYPSIES; OTHER HAPPENINGS

(16th in a Series)

By Kenneth Haney

Next to the fear of spooks and ghosts was that of the gypsy.

These nomadic people traveled in groups of 10 to 20 wagons resembling those used by those going west. They were drawn by two horses with hooches (colts) tied along side and a cargo of kids.

They lifted anything they got their hands on. These men would take hay, corn or anything to feed their skinny horses (sometimes called nags or plugs).

They were "smooth" horse traders. Reminded me of trading pocket knives in school "sight unseen." You traded a beautiful handled knife with no blades for one with sharp blades and the handle broken.

The women would roam the country telling fortunes, curing your neuralgia or arthritis by "laying their hands" on you and leaving with your purse.

Sometimes they would say they had a sick child in the wagon to get sympathy and gain entrance to the home.

The story was that they sometimes abducted little children.

They were never jailed, just ordered to give back their "snitched" goods and move on.

With the coming of cars they took on modern transportation.

Stealing was not in the gypsy language.

Don Fox reports his father Jacob was sorting pickles in the back yard when a gypsy woman came to tell his fortune. They generally camped in the Hastings school yard. As she started to go after failing to tell his fortune, she said, "I'll just take this little kid along." Don "skeeattled" into the house and never came out that day.

#### Others Remember

And then, there was the pony ranch on the Jacob Walters farm (now owned by Harvey Hollar and Verl George). To a child a pony has always been a must at a certain age.

These 40 to 60 beautiful Shebang ponies were like a Sears or Montgomery Ward catalog -- just wishing books. Very few could afford these "high priced" luxuries and they were just that in comparison with other things.

At the noon hour when the onion weederes rested the larger boys would ride pet -- Speed, Fly, Beauty, Blacky, etc. -- but, as some of us were too small we could only look and wish pa and ma had more money.

In talking about raising hemp Herman George relates this incident:

One morning he and George Carl of Nappanee started for Pierceton to get two loads of hemp machinery. The first day's journey took them to Pierceton. They loaded the machinery and bedded down the horses for the night.

Early the next morning they took the old Pierceton-Winona road to Warsaw. Just west of Pierceton, near a creek, the road had been raised and filled with new dirt. It was their luck to meet several loads of logs coming toward town.

In attempting to pass on this narrow road the berm gave way and dumped their machinery down the incline. Patiently and with much labor the loads were put on the wagon again. They made Warsaw by night fall.

The next day through the mire and mud on old 15 they made Milford. Sometimes as they rested their horses the load would sink and they had to double team to start again.

The next day -- Nappanee and home.

The Laughlin brothers were now ready to process the hemp that was to be one of the main booming businesses of Nappanee for a decade.



My mother, Mrs. Frances B. Haney, received a letter from Mrs. Leona (Pinkerton) Seckles of Dearborn, Missouri, last week. She is the daughter of "Big" Wes Pinkerton of the Pinkerton settlement.

As a maiden she palled around with mother and Minnie Weimer. These ladies hover around the 90-year mark.

On our way to Houston, Texas, about eight years ago, Mrs. Haney and I stopped in St. Joe, Missouri, to visit Mr. Seckles. Wish I had time to recite her early Island life before moving.

\* \* \*

My mother's home place was at the south edge of Jefferson Township, now owned by my brother, Loyal.

My grandfather, William Weaver, moved there from the south side of Big Turkey Lake (Wawasee). Many times he would go to Syracuse by crossing the big lake, through the channel at Oakwood Park and end up at now Syracuse Lake to do his trading.

Fish was plentiful and was one of the main sources of food in those days.

\* \* \*

Someone reminded me I forgot Dog Town, a nickname for Gravelton, and that I failed to mention that Ransom (Spinner) Sawyer of that city was one of the last of the traveling butchers. A practice that has now disappeared.

Many times my thoughts go back to the old log house that stood about 40 rods to the southeast of where I live.

Many times as you walked over the upstairs floor you could see your footprints in the white snow that had sifted through the cracks during the night.

Wading those two to four feet snowdrifts to Hastings school and arriving with frozen hands or ears was not for the timid -- frozen dinners, no lights on those gloomy days. High school five to seven miles away -- not pleasant thoughts.

And then when I hear folks with modern homes, cars, televisions, radios, and about everything that money can buy I think of the saying, "Contentment consisteth not in the abundance of things," else everybody would be happy and singing. I am thankful for these challenges in life.

\* \* \*

I suppose I had to stay in at recess to learn some poetry about as much as anybody. After teaching school for many years and in my present occupation many of these "gems" come to mind.

The "Village Blacksmith" on Emeline street where the sparks would fly as a hot shoe was shapened for a horse's hoof stirs my memory.

He goes on Sunday to the church and sits among the boys.  
He can hear the parson prayer and preacher and hear his  
daughter's voice sitting in the village choir and it makes his  
heart rejoice. . .Can you finish the poem?

And then, as I view the Montcalm-Wolfe monument on the  
Plains of Abraham in Quebec, Canada, I muse:

I boast of heraldry the pomp of power  
And all that beauty or that wealth 'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour  
The path of glory lead but to the grave.

Standing in front of the monument in Gettysburg Cemetery  
you repeat the immortal lines by Lincoln, "Four score and seven  
years ago our fathers ..... shall not perish from the  
earth."

Are you acquainted with "Gradadim," "To a Water Fowl,"  
"Grays," "Elegy," "Snow Bound," "The King of the Golden River,"  
or "The Great Stone Face"? Ah! You can't beat this good  
literature and thoughts. We need more of this uplifting  
influence and less of the cheap degrading paperbacks for our  
youth.

'LET'S TAKE A TRIP

(Last in a Series)

By Kenneth Haney

Mrs. Haney and I have been fortunate in visiting and traveling through 43 of the states in the continental United States.

As we travel there lurks in our minds -- "Oh! that our parents would have had the opportunities that we have of going places." Most of them never got out of the state.

With the pleasure of traveling and as a conclusion to these articles about the Island I would like for you to read this poem which was the end of a series of articles I wrote on western travel several years ago.

LET'S TAKE A TRIP

Original -- Kenneth Haney

I

Just a little less griping and a little more grip

A little more sober and a little less sip;

A little less getting and a couple more gifts,

A little less pushing and a little more lift.

A little more flying and a few less flops,

A few less sighs and a few more trips;

And I tell you friends as we go along  
Our hearts will sing a joyful song.

II

A little less piece of your tongue to give,  
A little more peace of mind to live;  
A little more joy and a little less woe,  
A little more kindness and a little less toe.  
Forget this humdrum life,  
And journey with your tired wife,  
And it will follow ere the day is gone  
She'll be singing a loving song.

III

Now, let's plant the beans and corn, I say,  
Combine the oats, and make the hay;  
Harvest the wheat, and still the spear,  
For vacation time is nearly here.  
Close up the shop, shut down the mill,  
Close up the store, and forget the till;  
And I say to you neighbors in the summer long,  
You'll be humming a happy song.

IV

So buy a new tire, put in a plug,  
Cast in the baggage, give her a hug;  
Put in some gas, lay in a stove,  
Throw in a tent, for we're going to rove.  
Pull up the blind, put down the sash,  
Turn off the juice, pick up your cash;  
And with your kids all packed in, strong  
There'll come forth a merry song.

V

Okefenokee or Tower of Bok,  
Cascades of Washington or Mount of Rock,  
I see views of Canyon Grand,  
All these and Dunes of Sand;  
Paul Bunyon, his ox, and Smokey Bear,  
Scent of pines and mountain air,  
And as you gaze on Niagara Falls, long,  
You'll remember your wedding song.

VI

You'll look in her face and say, "my dear"  
Possibly you'll shed a tear;  
That in this hustle, bustle, and busy life,

You neglected your loving, faithful wife.  
You see her trust and you see her grace,  
You see the joy in her kind face;  
And with a wish her years would be long,  
You'll just whistle a grateful song.

VII

When you look in the fire and your steps are slow,  
Your eyes are dim and your hair is snow;  
And your wants are few, your old friends are still,  
Your youth is gone you're over the hill.  
And with a prayer that both of you,  
Can take a trip as you used to do;  
With Christ, you Guide -- it won't be long,  
Till your soul will sing an eternal song.

Thanks to those who expressed their pleasure in these articles. I could go on and on but time doesn't permit.

Thanks to all of you for your help.

Last week began the solicit for CROP, and don't forget to take your good books and magazines to your church on December 26 to be taken to the Indiana State Prison.

Glad to have had you along in Hastings! Bye.

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